



The Bridges Federation

Social Networking Policy

September 2018



Introduction to the Policy

The Bridges Federation is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites.

The widespread use and availability of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children and young people.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity.

The requirements of this policy apply to all users of social networking applications that are accessed for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the school representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

Social networking applications used within school include:

- Blogs, such as Wordpress
- Collaborative spaces, such as Makewav.es
- Media sharing services, for example LGfL Video Central
- Micro-Blogging applications, such as Twitter

All school representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's other policies.

1. Use of social networking applications in **directed time** for personal use only is not permitted, unless the head teacher has granted permission.
2. All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service must be approved by the head teacher first.

Use of social networking applications, which are not related to any school services does not need to be approved by the head teacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.



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School representatives must adhere to the following terms of use outlined below. They apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications, and internal communications such as the Intranet and Fronter Classrooms.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expressions attaches only to lawful conduct. Snowsfields Primary & Tower Bridge Primary Schools expect that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of use.

Terms of Use

Social Networking (Personal) applications:

- Must not be used to publish any content, which may result in action for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes, but is not limited to, material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring Snowsfields Primary & Tower Bridge Primary Schools into disrepute.
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner.
- Must not be used for actions that would put the school representatives in breach of school codes or policies relating to staff.
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies.
- **Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to the school, staff, pupils or parents.**
- **No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with.**
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity/event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Head Teacher.
- Staff should be aware that if their out of work activity causes potential embarrassment for the school or detrimentally affects the school's reputation then the Head Teacher is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Social Networking (School) applications:

- Staff must inform the Designated Person if they open a twitter account as a member of staff.
- You may wish to start your twitter name with sns or tb e.g. snsJo,
- Staff must use this account only for school business.
- Staff should check their account regularly that they are not being followed by pupils or ex pupils under 18. Ex pupils should follow snsprimary or tbprimary.
- If a safeguarding concern is raised through twitter, staff should immediately email as a group the entire leadership team (Kate Wooder, Jo Cranmer, Laura Neuveglise, Zohra Benotmane, Helen Viggiani, Maureen Chance, Emma Flanagan, and Michelle Owens).

Violation of this policy will be considered as **gross misconduct** and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

Guidance/protection for staff using Social Networking

1. No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites, **unless they are communicating about school through dedicated school accounts which are continuously monitored.**
2. No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18. This relates to the acceptance of 'friendship' outlined in the Terms of Use.



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3. Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment.
4. It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child
5. If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the Headteacher or Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding within school.

Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

Net Aware

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/askfm/>

Net Aware have reviewed social networking sites, apps and games which are most popular with children, the review also includes the minimum user age.

e.g. Facebook (13 years +) is a social network which lets you create a page about yourself. You can add friends, write on people's pages, share photos and videos including live videos. Facebook Messenger allows you to instant message in group chats or one to one. Facebook allows live streaming.

1. No pupil under the age of 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This guidance is taken from both Facebook and Twitter. However the use of Twitter within the school environment under strict supervision from the practitioner is acceptable, ensuring the Terms of Use are adhered to.
2. All mobile phones must be handed into the School Office at the beginning of the day, and locked away safely. Failure to adhere to this, may result in the ban of the pupil using a mobile phone.
3. No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's area on networking sites. This may result in access to these resources being restricted and parents informed.
4. **No pupil should be given access to or allowed to access Staff areas within the network which may have access to areas of the school and wider network, currently off limits to pupils.**
5. Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
6. We have a zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying.
7. Parents will be informed if a child is identified as accessing social media
8. Parents will be regularly informed and supported with information about online safety through parent workshop and newsletters.

Safeguarding Guidance

If the head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed previously they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with the Safeguarding policy.
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes
- If disclosure comes from a member of staff, maintain confidentiality wherever possible.
- If disclosure is from a child, follow normal processes within the Safeguarding policy

This Policy will be reviewed in September 2019